

The 16th Century fixer upper! Two brothers begin £4m restoration of Grade II-listed house once attacked by Oliver Cromwell's men that has sat empty for 15 years

- Stephen and Phil Kirkwood bought Island House in Laugharne after driving past it every day for 40 years
- The Grade II listed building in West Wales was damaged by cannon fire from Oliver Cromwell's troops in 1644
- It was repaired but fell into ruin after standing empty for 15 years - it's currently on Britain's 'at risk' register

By [LUKE MAY FOR MAILONLINE](#)

PUBLISHED: 14:22, 26 May 2020 | **UPDATED:** 15:09, 26 May 2020

Two brothers are hoping to breathe new life into a 16th century house, which once came under cannon fire from Oliver Cromwell's forces, by spending up to £4million on its restoration.

Island House in Laugharne, West Wales has centuries of history behind it, but has fallen into disrepair after sitting empty for 15 years.

In 1644 the house was damaged by cannon fire from Oliver Cromwell's troops, who were attacking nearby Laugharne Castle during the Civil War.



+12

•

Island House in Laugharne, West Wales, dates back to the 16th century. After falling into ruin over the last 15 years, two brothers are going to spend millions of pounds restoring it to its former glory



+12

•
Neighbours in Laugharne set up the Save Island House Campaign after watching the building fall apart. Founder Denize McIntyre said the building was just 12 months from falling apart before the Kirkland brothers intervened



Stephen Kirkwood (pictured) has driven past Island House for the past 40 years, together with his brother Phil he hopes to restore the Grade II listed building to its former glory

It was repaired to its former glory and stood for hundreds of years, but it has fallen into ruin after it was emptied in 2005 and has sat on Britain's 'at risk' register since 2011.

Stephen and Phil Kirkwood have decided to spend between £3million and £4million restoring Island House, which Stephen has driven past every day for the past 40 years.

Denize McIntyre, who headed the Save Island House Campaign, said the group knew the building had a 'death sentence'.

He said: 'It was unlikely to withstand another 12 months, certainly not much longer, and people really got behind that.

'We first came in on a wet, soggy day - it was raining indoors. We were squelching through years of fallen rotten debris and now, every time I come in, I can't stop smiling when you see the progress being made. It's just amazing.

'This house couldn't be more central to Laugharne and yet it was here like an eyesore.



The interior has a large ballroom on the first floor with sea views and 19th-century interior details, once a two year restoration is complete the Kirland's hope to open Island House in Laugharne as a boutique hotel



Stephen Kirkland says he has been driving past the outside of Island House in the town of Laugharne for 40 years. With it falling into ruin since 2005, Stephen and his brother are now spending millions on restoring it



With the house falling into disrepair, the Kirkland brothers are prepared to spend up to £4million restoring it to its former glory, with plans to open it as a hotel with a restaurant and a cafe



+12

Oliver Cromwell's forces damaged Island House while attacking Laugharne Castle during the Civil War in 1644

'So to see it restored will be a proper boost, a shot in the arm for the whole community. We can take pride in this building.'

Property developer Stephen, 67, said: 'It was something my brother Phil and I thought we could take on and make into a property that was worth having here.'

'Laugharne is very important to us and we'd like to see this restored. We know it's a huge task but we're looking forward to it.'

'We've got a magnificent castle just behind us, and this was a ruin in front of it. I've driven past this house every day for 40 years, so why not do it?'

Laugharne Castle was first garrisoned by King Charles I during the Civil War, but it was taken by parliamentary forces. When those forces switched allegiances, it was besieged by Oliver Cromwell's army. During the siege Island House was damaged by cannon fire and later restored. Nearly 400 years later, the Kirkwell's restoration will cost between £3m and £4m with plans to turn it into a boutique hotel with a restaurant and cafe.

Work has already started to clear the overgrown grounds - with a forgotten summer house being revealed.

Archaeological surveys are also being carried out which could reveal further secrets. The restoration is expected to take two years to complete.



+12

•
Island House has views of the sea and of nearby Laugharne Castle. A forgotten summerhouse within the grounds has already been unearthed as clearing work gets underway



© Denize McIntyre/WALES NEWS SERVICE

+12

•



+12

•
Historic features still stand inside parts of Island House, in West Wales including a set of stairs dating back to the 19th century and curved shutters in some of the bedrooms



+12

- **Island House stands in front of Laugharne Castle, in 1644 the house came under cannon fire by Oliver Cromwell's forces who were attacking the nearby fort after an occupying parliamentary force switched allegiances and joined the King's men**

Share or comment on this article:

Island House in Laugharne to undergo £4m two-year restoration

- •
[Prokopios](#), Oxford, United Kingdom, 2 months ago

I wish the daily mail could understand the difference between a Grade II and a Grade II* building. Island house is grade II*, which is "more than special interest". Only about 6 percent of all listed buildings are in this category, making it a very special building indeed.

[Tom](#), Swansea, United Kingdom, 2 months ago

Good luck. Fantastic project. I have immense respect for anyone doing this type of project. The really awkward challenge won't be the building work it will be dealing with the planning department. We know what they are like all over the UK.

[Concerned](#), Plymouth, United Kingdom, 2 months ago

What a beautiful house, I'd love to see it when it is finished..

[Omigosh](#), Etherville, 2 months ago

Grade 2 listed and in Wales. I hope they have lots - and lots - of patience as they will need it as they will have the pleasure of dealing with Cadw.

[2](#)